

THE "ORTHODOX" RUSSIAN, AND THE SCHISMATIC GREEK CHURCHES.

THE Atlantic cable informs us that "the Pope and the Czar are negotiating with a view to the reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches; and that, as the Pope is willing to let the Greek Church retain its own manner of worship, it is expected that the negotiations will be successful."* Good news certainly, and most consoling, if the history of past "negotiations" did not warn us not to be over sanguine as to the result of future ones.

In many minds the Russian, or, as it styles itself, the "orthodox" Church, is synonymous with the schismatic Greek Church; but it is not schismatic Greek in origin, nor is it Greek in language, polity, or government. The schismatic Greek Church is composed of those Christians who recognize the spiritual jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, and is confined to the territories once embraced in the Byzantine (now known as the Ottoman) Empire,† with its vassal (now only *quasi* vassal) States—Egypt, Nubia, etc. The Russian Church communicates with the schismatic Greek

* June, 1887.

† In 1833 the hierarchy of the new Kingdom of Greece declared its independence of the patriarch, and in 1868 that prelate recognized its autonomy.

and, in spite of its own liturgy, which stoutly asserts the primacy of the Roman See,* agrees with the schismatic Greeks in rejecting the authority of the Roman Pontiff; but it is, in every respect, a national church. It recognizes no earthly authority over itself but that of the "Holy Synod," a body entirely dependent on the Czar. Originally, the metropolitan of Russia was nominated by the sovereign, and consecrated by the Constantinopolitan patriarch; but after the schism the czars began to act, more and more, as heads of the Church. In 1589, the Patriarch Jeremiah II. recognized Job, metropolitan of Moscow, as Patriarch of Russia, and as next in rank to him of Alexandria. In the reign of Alexis Michaelovitch, father of Peter the Great, Nikon of Moscow rejected the authority of Constantinople; and in 1667, Nikon having offended Alexis, he was deposed, and the power of his successors became nominal. Peter the Great finally, in 1721, placed the government of the Russian Church in a "Holy Synod," every member of which swears obedience to the Czar as "supreme judge in this spiritual assembly."

* The Russian liturgical books, written in Old Slavonic, are full of such testimonies. Thus, Pope St. Sylvester is called "the divine head of the holy bishops." Pope St. Leo I. is styled "the successor of St. Peter on the highest throne, the heir of the impregnable rock." To Pope St. Martin is said: "Thou didst adorn the divine throne of Peter, and, holding the church upright on this rock which cannot be shaken, thou didst honor thy name." Pope St. Leo III. is thus addressed: "Chief pastor of the Church, fill the place of Jesus Christ." St. Peter is called the sovereign pastor of all the Apostles—"pastyr vladychnyi vsich Apostolov,"

The language of the Russian Church is not the Greek, but the Slavonic; and not the vernacular, but the Old Slavonic, with which the people are not familiar. Protestants are much mistaken when, reading that the Greeks, Syrians, Copts, etc., celebrate their services in Greek, Syriac, Coptic, etc., they imagine they discover an example for their own use of the vernacular. The languages used in the rituals of these peoples are very different from those in daily use. Nor do the Russians owe their conversion to the Greek schismatic Church. This conversion was effected by the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church; for whether, as we learn from Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the first missionaries to Russia were sent by the Catholic Patriarch Ignatius (867), or, as Nestor asserts, they were sent by the schismatic Photius (866), it is certain that no real impression was made upon the Russian masses until toward the end of the tenth century,* when the Grand Duke Vladimir, called “the Apostolic,” embraced Christianity; and at that time the Greeks were in communion with Rome. The revival of the schism, by Michael Cerularius, did not much

* About the year 945 Olha, Olga, or Elga, widow of a grand duke (or king) of Russia, made a journey to Constantinople, and was there baptized. Returning to Russia, she vainly endeavored to convert her countrymen. But her grandson, Vladimir, having married Anna, sister of the Greek Emperor Basil II., was baptized in 988, and in a few years nearly all the Russians received the Faith. Those authors who assign the conversion of Russia to the ninth century, remarks Bergier, confuse the reign of Basil II. with that of Basil the Macedonian.

affect the Russians. Not until the twelfth century were they entirely seduced from the Roman obedience. Then, with the exception of the Church of Galicia,* most of the Russians ceased to be Catholics. However, at the time of the Council of Florence (1439) there were as many Catholics as schismatics in Russia. (Bollandists: "September," v. 41.) About the middle of the fifteenth century, a second Photius, Archbishop of Kiev, extended the schism throughout the land.

Some authors opine that the schism of Cerularius did not affect even the entire Greek Empire in the eleventh century. Certainly, Pope Alexander II. sent Peter, Bishop of Anagni, as *apocrisiarius* (agent, not legate) to the Emperor Michael Ducas in 1071, and he continued as such for a whole year. When, in 1078, St. Gregory VII. excommunicated Nicephorus Botoniates, it was only because of his having dethroned Ducas, who was in communion with the Holy See. Pope Paschal II. sent Chrysolanus (or, as some write the name, Grosolanus, or Proculanus) as legate to Alexis Comnenus. Alexandre and Mansi hold that there was communion between the West and East for some time after the excommunication of Cerularius and his pretended retaliation of the same. It is noteworthy that

* The Catholics of Galicia, or Red Russia, who number two millions of Ruthenians, as they are called, use the Slavonic liturgy, and their secular clergy may marry before receiving Holy Orders.

Euthymus Zygabenus, who, by order of Alexis Comnenus, collected the sayings of the Fathers against each and every heresy, makes no mention of the Latins as heretics. Even in the twelfth century there were many Greeks in communion with Rome, as we learn from the many narratives of the Crusades, from the “Alexias” of Anna Comnena, from the “Life of Manuel” by Nicetas Choniates, and from the letters (B. IV., Nos. 39, 40) of the Venerable Peter of Cluny to the Emperor John Comnenus and to the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The following remarks of Father Gagarin, than whom the reader will find no better authority on matters concerning the Russian Church, are worthy of attention: “It was only in a very indirect manner that the Russian Church was drawn into schism. The metropolitans of Kiev depended, in the hierarchical order, upon Constantinople. When the rupture between Rome and Byzantium took place, Kiev found itself separated from the centre of unity; but for a long time the Russians did not share the passions of the Greeks, and it may be said that, for a long period, merely a material schism subsisted between Rome and the Russian Church. But the clergy of Constantinople endeavored to imbue the Russians with their own prejudices and with their hatred of the Latins. They succeeded, and when the princes of Moscow manifested a design of attacking the independence of the Russian Church, this body could rely on itself alone.

“As yet no one has written the sad and touching history of the struggle which this Church, isolated from the West, and betrayed by the East, sustained against the growing ambition of the grand dukes and czars of Moscow. And, nevertheless, that history has some beautiful pages. If the Russian Church succumbed, it was not without combat or without glory. Ivan III., if not from conviction, at least ostensibly, belonged to a sect which designed to substitute Judaism for Christianity. The metropolitan of Moscow had been seduced, but the Russian Church preserved sufficient strength and independence to condemn the impure doctrines. When Ivan IV., who much resembled Henry VIII. of England, shed the blood of his subjects in torrents, and trampled on the authority of the Church to gratify his passions, Philip, metropolitan of Moscow, spoke to him with apostolic liberty, and sealed his remonstrances with his blood. But the Church continued to lose ground, and when Boris Godounov transformed the metropolitan of Moscow into a patriarch (1588), that elevation was, in his mind, for the purpose of furnishing the Czar with a willing tool.”*

Although the “orthodox” Russians and schismatic Greeks, like the Nestorians and Jacobites, are witnesses to the antiquity of many dogmas which Protestants regard as modern human innovations,

* “*La Russie, Sera-t-elle Catholique?*” Paris, 1856.

Protestant polemics ever show much sympathy for the aversion cherished by these schismatics toward the Holy See. The children of the Reformation have often endeavored to enter into communion with these separatists, but their efforts have resulted, each time, only in a formal condemnation of Protestant tenets by the progeny of Photius and Cerularius. Two of these attempts at union between the Eastern and Western opponents of Rome merit attention.

In 1574 Stephen Gerlach, a Lutheran, and preacher to the imperial embassy at Constantinople, was urged by many of his co-religionists to obtain from Jeremiah II., Patriarch of Constantinople, an endorsement of the "Confession of Augsburg" as consonant with the faith of the schismatics. But Jeremiah combatted the "Confession" as heretical, with tongue and pen. In 1672 Dositheus, schismatic Patriarch of Jerusalem, convoked a synod to consider the doctrines of Calvin, and the synodals said of the Lutheran overtures to Jeremiah: "Martin Crugius, and others well versed in the new doctrines of Luther, sent the articles of their 'Confession' to him who then sat on the throne of the Catholic Constantinopolitan Church, that they might learn whether they agreed in doctrine with the Oriental churches. But that great Patriarch wrote to them—yea, against them—three learned discourses, or replies, wherein he theologically and Catholicly refuted their entire heresy, and taught them the

orthodox doctrines which the Oriental Church received from the beginning. However, they paid no attention; for they had bidden farewell to all piety. The patriarch's book was issued, in Greek and Latin, at Wittemberg in Germany, in the year of salvation 1584; but before the time of Jeremiah, the entire doctrine of the Oriental Church had been more fully set forth by the priest John Nathaniel, procurator of Constantinople, in his 'Treatise on the Sacred Liturgy;' and after the said Jeremiah, this was also done by Gabriel Severus Moreanus, Archbishop of our brethren of Crete, in his book on 'The Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church.'''*

Another and more celebrated attempt to unite the Western innovators and the Eastern schismatics was made in the seventeenth century. Cyril Lucar, a Candiote, was sent to the University of Padua when a youth, where he studied under the famous Margunius, Bishop of Cythera. After his graduation he travelled in Germany, and became infected with the new doctrines. Nevertheless, on his return among the Greeks he received the priesthood, and in time became Patriarch of Alexandria. In 1621, having bribed the Grand Vizier, with money furnished by the Calvinists of Holland, he was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. He began immediately to teach Calvinism; the clergy revolted; Cyril was exiled to Rhodes, and Anthimus

* We have followed the Latin version of this Synod of Jerusalem (or of Bethlehem), made by an anonymous Benedictine of St. Maur, and first published at Paris, in 1676.

of Adrianople was placed on the patriarchal throne. However, the intrigues of the English ambassador caused the Porte to recall Cyril, and he soon published a "Confession of Faith" of the most Calvinistic type. In 1636 the indignation of the Greeks compelled the Porte to again banish the innovator, but after three months he was once more recalled—only to be bow-stringed, by order of the Porte, in 1638.*

Lucar's "Confession of Faith" appeared in Holland in 1645, and was gladly welcomed by Protestants as a harbinger of their recognition by the historically venerable churches of the East; but the consequent publication of the justly celebrated "Perpetuity of the Faith of the Catholic Church concerning the Eucharist" demonstrated the fallaciousness of their hopes.† They soon found that the Greeks admitted their agreement with Rome concerning most of the Catholic dogmas. Indeed,

* Spondanus: y. 1627, no. 9; y. 1638, no. 14; y. 1639, no. 12.—Claude: "Réponse à La Perpétuité de la Foi," La Havre, 1670.—Hottinger: "Analecta Hist. Theol."—Du Pin: "Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques."—Thos. Smith: "Life of Cyril Lucar."

† In the five quarto volumes of which this work consists, are collected testimonies of all the Greek ecclesiastical authors who wrote after the schism of Photius; the professions of faith of many patriarchs and bishops; declarations of many synods; the liturgies, etc., of the East. It is proved that in all ages, just as to-day, the Orientals admitted seven Sacraments, and held that these produce (?) grace; that, as now, they believed in Transubstantiation; that, as now, they prayed to the saints, prayed for the dead. It is also shown

as soon as Lucar's "Confession" appeared in Constantinople, the author was synodically deposed, and Cyril of Berea was made patriarch. This prelate convoked a synod in 1638, and a condemnation of Lucar's "Confession" was signed by the three schismatic patriarchs (of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem), and by twenty-three bishops. Soon after, bribery and intrigue procured the patriarchal chair for Parthenius of Adrianople, who in 1642 held another synod, which again reprobated Lucar's teachings. In 1672 Dositheus of Jerusalem celebrated the synod already mentioned, which confirmed the decisions of the other assemblies.

In the "Acts" of this assembly we read that the Greek schismatics accused the Calvinists (whom they styled "liars, innovators, heretics, mendacious architects, apostates, who, like all heretics, are artificial explainers of Scripture and of the Fathers,") of calumniating the Orientals by the assertion that the said Orientals held Calvinistic doctrine. And this assertion was made, say the bishops, in spite

that Lucar manifested, not the sentiments of his Church, but his own opinions—a fact proved by himself when he proposed his doctrine as one he would like to introduce among the Greeks. In the last two volumes of the "Perpetuity," the doctrine of the Catholic and schismatic Greek Churches is compared with that of the Nestorians, who separated from Rome in the fifth century, and with that of the Eutychians, or Jacobites, who became schismatics in the sixth. Then follows an exposition of the belief and of the discipline of the Ethiopians, Egyptian Copts, Maronites, and of the Nestorians scattered throughout Persia and India.

of so many declarations of Greek patriarchs; in spite of the publication of the "orthodox" belief; in spite of the lucid treatises of many Greek doctors. Then follow eighteen chapters, in which the synodals declare that man's free-will was not destroyed by the fall of Adam; that faith alone will not justify; that there are seven sacraments; that Baptism cleanses from original sin; that in the Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine is really changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ; that the saints are to be invoked as friends of God; that their images are to be venerated; that we must receive all traditions given us by the Church, which, being taught by the Holy Ghost, can not err.

Disappointed in their hopes of union with some ecclesiastical body of comparative antiquity, the Calvinists accounted for the adverse action of the schismatic synods by the supposition of Latin bribery. Thus, in 1722, appeared the book of Cowell, an Englishman, who tried to prove that fraud was behind the apparent agreement of the Roman and schismatic doctrines. Mosheim affects to discover, in the history of the Lucar affair, that Catholic polemics do not scruple at dishonesty when disputing with heretics. Now, it is false that the Greek bishops who condemned the Western "reformers" were partial to the Latins. Cyril of Berea, like many other schismatic prelates and

priests of his time, may have died, as Mosheim asserts, in the Roman communion, but the dominant spirits of the synods in question would have rivalled a Scotch covenanter in hatred of Rome. Nectarius, an ex-patriarch of Jerusalem, composed an energetic diatribe "Against the Primacy of the Pope." Dositheus, the president of the Synod of Jerusalem, published, in 1683, many works of Simeon of Thessalonica, in which this writer severely upbraids the Latins. Again, if these Greek adversaries of the "Reformation" were actuated by a desire of pleasing Rome, why did they, in these very synods, so strenuously assert their peculiar dogma concerning the Procession of the Holy Ghost? Finally, how is it that the Greeks, so bitter against the Holy See, so tenacious of their own distinctive doctrines, did not depose Dositheus, Nectarius, Parthenius, etc.?

From the day of her separation from Rome, the Greek Church, once so active, has been in a state of lethargy, displaying none of that fecundity which Christ promised to His own spouse. "The prodigious ignorance and stupid superstition," says Feller, "in which the priests and people of this isolated Church are involved, necessarily entail the great abuses and enormous disorders with which they are reproached. For centuries the Greeks can show no celebrated doctor, no council worthy of attention. Their latest sages—Bessarion, Al-

latius, Arcudius, etc.,—all belonged to the Church of Rome.”*

And now a few words as to the probability of a submission of the Russian “orthodox” Church to the Roman jurisdiction. The Czar may devoutly wish for union with Rome. If he is a statesman, he must realize that the activity and zeal of a Papal clergy would be a great check to the growth of Nihilism. The more learned and more pious of the “orthodox” clergy—too few, alas! in number—may yearn for unity. But there is one obstacle, which apparently, neither the once power-

* Again we call the reader’s attention to some reflections of Gagarin: “Bizantism pretended to have for its object the exaltation and triumph of the Greek Church, Empire, and nationality. It sacrificed the unity and independence of the Church to that object, and what has been the result of the conflict which it provoked? The ruin of the Greek Church, and consequently of the Greek Empire and nationality. But God did not wish that this ancient and glorious Church should perish. He raised up a new people, who seem to have the mission of re-establishing her in her pristine splendor. That people is the Slavic, and three-fourths of them belong to the Oriental rite, with this difference, that their liturgical language is the (Old) Slavonic. One can not avoid being struck by the contrast between the Slavonic and Greek branches of the Oriental rite. The former possesses numbers, force, vigor, while the latter exhibits only feebleness and decrepitude. Laying aside every other argument, the figures will make this difference palpable. It is estimated that all the Oriental Christians—Slavs, Greeks, Moldo-Wallachians, or Roumanians, Georgians, etc.,—number about seventy million souls, of whom nearly sixty millions are Slavs. If from the ten or twelve remaining millions we deduct those who are not Greeks, we see to how small a number the Greeks are reduced. Now, the Slavs of the Oriental rite are nearly all subjects of the Russian Empire.”

ful inclinations of a Czar nor the fast-decreasing influence of a corrupt clergy can overcome. When England shall have learned the wisdom of doing justice to Ireland, there may be hope that Russia will commence to doubt the wisdom of her policy toward *her Ireland*—unfortunate, noble, and exhausted Poland. But as yet, to the average Russian mind, Poland is a subject only for the iron heel; and *Catholicism*, to this mind, means *Latinism*,—i. e., *Polanism*. The Russian “patriot,” therefore, regards any progress of Catholicism in “Holy Russia” as a progress of Polish nationality.

Again, the Russian clergy have always systematically inculcated the idea that a reunion with Rome means the abolition of several institutions dear to the Russian heart—viz., Communion under both species, the use of fermented bread in the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Old Slavonic liturgy, and the marriage of the secular clergy. And here we must note that nothing can be more false than the idea entertained by most of the Eastern schismatics that whenever there has been a question of reunion with Rome, the Holy See has designed to force them to adopt the Latin rite and discipline. While it is true that in the Ottoman Empire all of the United or Catholic Greeks, excepting the Syrian Melchites; and that in Poland, very many members of the Greek rite have passed over to the Latin rite; the Holy See can not be justly blamed for these facts, since they are to be ascribed to causes

completely foreign to the actions of the Catholic missionaries.* In refutation of this idea of the Papal intentions, Benedict XIV., in his Bull *Alletæ sunt*, quotes the words of Pope Innocent IV., who cited two Constitutions of Pope Leo X. and Clement VII., in which these Pontiffs vehemently reprobated those Latins who blamed the Greeks for their observance of certain customs approved by the Council of Florence. The same Benedict XIV., speaking of those who were laboring for reunion, resumes their obligations as follows: (1.) They should disabuse the schismatics of those errors which their ancestors introduced in order that they

* "In Turkey," says Gagarin, "until the *hatti-houmayoum* of Feb. 18, 1856, all the Christians of the Greek rite were placed under the (civil) authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople; and when one of them renounced that prelate's communion to enter that of the Pope, it is evident that he was exposed to vexation by the former personage, who, though no longer his spiritual, was still his temporal ruler. He had only one way of escaping persecution, and that was a withdrawal from the patriarch's civil jurisdiction when he left the schismatic communion. To effect this withdrawal, he had to join the Latin rite. These few words ought to explain how, in Greece and the Archipelago, all the Catholic Greeks have been led to abandon the Greek rite. The concessions made by the Sultan Abdul-Mejid, on Feb. 18, 1856, deprived the patriarch of his civil authority over his co-nationals; but it has not yet been shown that the Greeks who were desirous of joining the Roman communion, and who still preferred to cling to their old rite, could do so with impunity. Let us judge, then, whether they could have done so a century or two ago. In Poland the circumstances were different, but the united Russians passed to the Latin rite because of similar influences. In the Republic of Poland there were two rites, two

might have a pretext for withdrawing from the obedience of the Sovereign Pontiff. As an easier method of converting said schismatics, the greatest stress should be laid upon the writings of the early Fathers of the Greek Church, who are in perfect accord with the Latin Fathers. (2.) To bring the Eastern schismatics into the fold of the true Church, it is not necessary to attack their rites. On the contrary, as the Apostolic See has always insisted, they must not be urged to follow the Latin rite. And in our own day Pope Pius IX., in an Encyclical address to the Orientals, under date of January 6, 1848, uttered the same sentiments. Nevertheless, the idea is firmly fixed in most Russian minds that union with Rome means the loss of their loved rite. This, added to their present sentiments as to the burning question of Poland, would seem to indicate that there is little probability of a speedy submission of the Russian Church to the Holy See.

languages, and two nationalities. The superiority was with the Poles; and when the convert adopted the Latin rite, he assumed Polish nationality, and entered the ranks of the dominant people. Does not this state of things explain the facts opposed to us?"